

HASHGACHA PRATIS

Inspirational messages and contemporary stories of hashgacha
From the Hashgacha Pratis Hotline

**Extended
issue**
including chizuk
post the tragedy
in Meron



Parshiyos Shevuos - Nasso 5781 ■ Issue 65

HEART TO HEART

Based on shiurim in
Duties of the Heart, Shaar Bitachon, given on the Hotline

Thousands upon Thousands of Golden Dinars

Before we talk about the reward waiting for us in the Next World, we have to realize the incredible fortunes we get in this world. The author of Sefer Chareidim (from the time of the Arizal) writes in his Shaar Ha'osios that a Jew should have tremendous joy when he does a mitzvah, since that creates great joy in the Upper Worlds. The more joy infused in a mitzvah, the greater a gift it is to Hashem!

The Arizal himself said that he merited all his lofty achievements in spirituality because of his joy when doing mitzvos. He did mitzvos with unbounded simcha. He taught that mitzvos are not to be regarded as a heavy burden that we have to get through, but as an opportunity to serve Hashem. We should feel this great zechus, no matter what it is – some mitzvos come only once in a while, and some every day, but each one is special. He put it as, "When you do a mitzvah, you are making thousands upon thousands of golden dinars!" You're becoming a millionaire!

The more you can feel this, the more simcha you'll have when you do a mitzvah. This brings Ruach Hakodesh upon a person; in the Arizal's case it was literal, and for us it means we draw closer to understanding what Hashem wants from us. This can change your life!

In the sefer Ohr Hagonuz there's a pshat from Rav Tzvi Hirsh MiZiditchov zy"l that "עבדו את ה'" is explained by the next word in the passuk. How should we serve Hashem? "בשמחה". This is avodas Hashem. It's such a powerful inyan that tzaddikim have said that if Jewish women would take advantage of their Erev Shabbos preparations

and do them with simcha, it could bring Moshiach! But, too often it's ruined by stress, anger and disputes and that prevents the shefa that could be created.

On the other hand, if care is taken to maintain an atmosphere of joy, if they labor to cook the Shabbos food and speak words of thanks to Hashem, it gives Hashem great nachas. Thank Him for your beautiful family, for parnosoh and health, your comfortable home and your guests.

Our mitzvos are very powerful, and if we would appreciate this, we would break out in a dance! The Kedushas Levi writes that every Jew is capable of connecting with this concept (Purim Kedusha 3). Don't be humble and think, "Oh, I'm such a simple person, my mitzvos can't be worth very much." No – this is not humility but heresy! Every Jew must know that he is a beloved and precious child of Hashem, and that Hashem waits for our mitzvos and treasures them to no end!

The Gemara (Zevachim 2b) says that one of the six intentions a Kohen must have when bringing a korban is "nicho'ach." Rashi explains that it means to give nachas ruach to Hakodosh Boruch Hu, that He commanded and we do His will. This applies to every mitzvah we do! Hashem didn't give them to angels, but to physical people, with all their imperfections and selfish interests. Do mitzvos with simcha and that will give Hashem tremendous nachas!

May we be zocheh to do His will with simcha and good-heartedness, always.

(From shiur 197 in Shaar Habitachon)

FROM THE EDITOR

Give Thanks to Hashem, even when evicted from Gan Eden

Shabbos night, right after Lag Ba'omer, I was trying to daven. Shabbos is a time to thank and praise Hashem, but my heart was too heavy. Then I got up to Mizmor Shir L'yom Ha'shabbos and remembered a vort I once heard.

When was this perek of Tehillim first said? Adam Harishon said it, after his sin. Picture it – Hashem had just created him a few hours earlier, placed him in Gan Eden, where angels served him wine and meat, surrounded by the most exquisite garden in the world.

Two hours before sunset, Hashem commanded him not to eat from the Eitz Hadaas, and then he sinned and ate from it.

With one hour to Shabbos, he was evicted from the Garden. Many curses were decreed upon him and his descendants for all time. This was his dismal situation when the first Shabbos descended on the world. How down he must have felt! He had just lost everything. How did he react?

The Midrash says that as soon as he saw Shabbos approaching, he began to sing! "Mizmor shir for the Shabbos – it is good to thank Hashem!" Then the angels came down and continued the Mizmor, "and to sing to Your Lofty Name." Some played harps and oboes, others cymbals and more musical instruments. This is the message inherent in this Perek. These should be our thoughts when Shabbos enters the world.

This thought gave me strength to thank Hashem with all my heart, and go into Shabbos with praise and song to Hashem!

Good Shabbos
Pinchas Shefer

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Lag Ba'omer 5781

From the shiurim on the Kav by our Mashpi'im shlit"a

Rabbi Yitzchak Moshe Erlanger shilt"a

We have no idea

"...ה' יקר לי אפרים אם ילד שעשועים... על כן המנו מעי לו רחם ארחמנו נאום ה'..."

This is ringing in our ears, with the sweet tune, from the Rosh Hashanah davening. Hashem is calling out to us, "My precious son, Efraim, a delightful child... My stomach churns thinking about him, and I will have mercy on him."

We have to return the love to Hashem!

The Chovos Halevavos (Shaar Ahavas Hashem Ch. 1) tells of the Chassid who was absolutely penniless, starving and naked. He looked up to Heaven and said, "My G-d! You have caused me pain, left me with nothing, but even if You burn me in fire, I will only increase my love towards You!"

We have no inkling as to Hashem's ways – this is the first yesod of emunah. The passuk says, "My thoughts are not like your thoughts; My ways are not like your ways." We have to nullify ourselves to the Creator of the world. "Our Father in Heaven: You know very well what You're doing, and we have no clue!"

The Chassidish seforim talk about this point. In Tehillim it says "all people are deceitful." This means that the human mindset is unable to discern the real truth. It is finite and limited. If a person uses his own intelligence to look at things, he must know it is not Hashem's mindset. Even if he tries to figure out how it's for the best, he is still not connecting with Hashem.

How can he cleave to Hashem? Only when he bangs on the table and announces, "Rabbosei, we don't know anything! We can't understand anything!" Then, he can bond with the Creator.

This is one of the foundations of Yiddishkeit: We have no understanding of Hashem, and we have no questions on Him at all.

Lots of people are asking why it happened. Nobody has any idea why this terrible thing happened! We have to stop our questioning and shout out that emunah means we trust in Hashem, and have no understanding of His ways.

The first yesod of Yiddishkeit is to cleave to the Borei Olam, without any barrier. What is a barrier? The human mind! Cleave to Hashem with honest purity. Ask Him, "How can I do more for You? How can I come closer to You?"

Don't say it was because of any reason, any sin. The Rambam says if you ignore tzaros you're cruel; certainly you have to do teshuvah, but the main avodah is to work on emunah and in that way come closer to Hashem.

May we see nechama, speedily.

Rav Naftali Erlanger shilt"a

The shluchim of Klal Yisroel

This tragedy is of such a huge scale, it doesn't even register. We have no way to comprehend how this could happen in such a holy place, at such a holy time, at the hilula of Rashb"i, Kodesh Hakodashim, in the midst of such simcha, with all of Klal Yisroel dancing together...

Hashem spoke to us at the greatest gathering of Yidden there is. Everyone who comes to Meron on Lag Ba'omer feels close to Hashem.

When the Divrei Chaim's daughter was niftar, he was very broken and found it hard to daven afterwards. Then he collected his thoughts and ruminated on the passuk, "שבטך ומשענתך המה ינחמוני" – Your stick and support comfort me." This is comparable to walking down the street and suddenly you feel a big blow on your back. Your first reaction is anger – who did that to me?! But then you turn around and see your old, close friend whom you haven't seen in years! He was the one who gave you a friendly slap on the back. Immediately all the ill feelings fade away. So too, concluded the Sanzer Rebbe, I realize I was given a blow, but

Who gave it to me? Abba in Shamayim! He's my best friend! This comforted the Rebbe, and he started davening with his usual fervor and joy.

We have to view this as a Heavenly action, caused by our merciful Father, who loves us without end. Rashb"i revealed the close and eternal bond between us and Hashem, and we have to remind ourselves that everything that happens is from His love and mercy. This was a hidden form of it, though.

Obviously, the niftarim themselves merited a very great elevation. They traveled there to take part in Rashb"i's simcha, left the world right after the

THE HAND OF HASHEM

The Key to Childbirth

In 5778, Family A traveled to Meron to thank Hashem for their three beautiful children and to ask that they merit to have more. Their youngest was already five years old. They davened at Rashbi's kever and promised that if they would have a boy they would name him Shimon in his honor.

Two years passed, and nothing happened. Then the wife's sister-in-law was due to get married, so she asked her to daven for them under the chuppah.

The kallah was silent for a moment, and then asked if she could tell her something.

"I remember that seven years ago, when you had your youngest child, you stayed at a Beit Hachlama (convalescent center for ladies after birth) with our cousin, but there was some misunderstanding with another woman there. Maybe you have to ask her mechilah," she suggested gently. The mother thought about it. Maybe she was right? Maybe another woman's hurt feelings were preventing her from having another child?

She recalled the uncomfortable event that occurred when she gave birth. At the time she had met a woman in the hospital, and they became friendly. Consequently, the woman requested a room with her at the Beit Hachlama. That was fine – until our protagonist walked in and discovered that her cousin was also signing in. They were so happy to greet each other, and immediately said they wanted to room together. What fun – two cousins, sharing the newborn experience!

The receptionist told Mrs. A. that she had already been assigned a room with the other woman. She responded that she had changed her mind, and asked for a room with just her cousin.

When the other woman found what had happened, she was somewhat insulted. She had been looking forward to having a roommate who she knew, even just a little bit. Now she would have nobody.

Seven years and no children later, Mrs. A. wondered if that was indeed the reason.

Now that she thought about it, her cousin hadn't given birth in all these years, either! She thanked her sister-in-law and resolved to do something about it. She called her cousin and spoke it out with her, and they decided that they should ask that lady for mechilah.

It wasn't easy to find her, though! They called the Beit Hachlama, but were told that they didn't keep records from so long ago. They couldn't remember the woman's name, but eventually they pieced together enough details to track her down. They spoke to her on the phone and tearfully asked for forgiveness.

She still remembered the incident, and she forgave them.

This year, a month before Lag Ba'omer, Mrs. A. gave birth to a baby boy! They fulfilled their promise and named him Shimon. Two days later, her cousin had a baby as well!

(From shiur 202 in Shaar Habitachon)

The Lost Stroller

My story could only happen because I listened to 200 shiurim of Reb Dovid Kletzkin on bitachon. Baruch Hashem, this gave me the strength to deal with the challenge when it came.

It was Erev Shabbos Parshas Tazria-Metzora, and I had to return money to gemachim. I asked my 11-year-old son if he could do it, and he readily agreed. I gave him the envelopes with \$3000 in them and put them in a small bag with a shoulder strap, so they shouldn't get lost. Once he was going out, I told him it would be a big help if he could take our two little ones along, in the double stroller. It was a hot day, and with a 20 minute walk to the gemach, I suggested they stop on the way at my mother's house for a drink.

Off they went. A half hour later, my mother called up to tell me that my son was crying hysterically in her house. He had stopped by her building and left the stroller outside... next to the garbage cans. When he came back out, it was

tzibbur accepted Ol Malchus Shomayim upon themselves, with emunah and simcha. They were selected to be the shluchoi tzibbur of Klal Yisroel, and we have no idea what they accomplished. We don't have the senses to see how many gilgulim were metukan, how many gezeiros they saved us from. If we could see it, we would thank Hashem with all our hearts, but we can't see it, so it's our nisayon. We do know that "everything Hashem does is for the good," and we trust that it's all for the best.

It happened on Lag Ba'omer, the day when gezeiros are "sweetened," and Rashb"i himself stated he could exempt the world from din. The Zohar says that he revealed the secrets of the Torah to arouse mercy for Klal Yisroel. Everything that happened here was nothing but Hashem's mercy, just in a hidden way, a painful way, but we trust that it is for the good. Everything is for the good!

In the famous story with Rabi Akiva, he suffered a whole chain of problems, but in the end he saw how it was all arranged for his best. So too, Hashem arranged for these neshamos the absolute best plan for them.

This is not to say that it isn't painful. We all feel tremendous tza'ar. But it already caused many good effects; many people were mitchazek. Chas ve'shalom we shouldn't blame anyone or anything. We have to keep repeating that everything is from Hashem's Hand, and for the good.

Rav Elimelech Biderman shlit"א

Where the curtain's closed - that's where the king is

In the tefillah for niftarim we say "Av harachamim;" "Kel molei rachamim." We stress this especially when we're matzduk the din over the death of our loved ones. Hashem is truly "full of mercy," but in this world we don't always see it. The next words are "Shochen bamromim" – in the Heavens, it's clear.

A mashal is that when you're driving in a car you can see only so far in front of you. In a plane, however, you have a much greater range of sight.

We don't understand anything here. But we believe with all our hearts that if it happened by Rashb"i, it must be for the good.

The Alexander Rebbe (the Akeidas Yitzchok), just minutes before he was murdered in Auschwitz, gave the following drasha. In Tehillim it says "להגיד בבוקר" "להגיד בלילה" "הסדרך ואמונתך בלילות." Why doesn't it say "our emunah in the nights" – why "Your emunah"? Because sometimes it's very hard to see Hashem's kindness, "at night," and yet Hashem has emunah in us that we'll withstand the nisayon!

Hashem announced to us this Lag Ba'omer: My precious children, I believe in you!

We have to understand two things. Everything is from Hashem, and everything is for the good.

When you reach out to another person, if you feel pressure on your hand, it means he's holding on tight.

The Tzaddik from Michelshadt was a child prodigy. The king heard about him and wanted to meet him in person, so he invited him to his palace. As a test for the boy, he told all his servants to leave while the tzaddik was kept in one of the rooms. His challenge was to figure out where the king was. He walked around a bit and opened the door to the king's room. The king was astounded; how did he figure it out? "Simple," replied the child, "I looked at the windows of the palace. The only one with heavy curtains on it must be yours."

The more concealment there is, the greater the glory hidden within. And when there is greater hester panim – that is where Hashem, the King of all kings, is hiding!

The Midrash says that when they were torturing and executing the Asarah Harugei Malchus, the angels protested. "This is Torah and this is its reward?!" Hashem answered them, "Silence! Another word and the world will revert to nothingness!" The Leshem explains that Hashem wasn't ignoring their question. He was saying that the world was deserving of destruction, but the zechus of these pure neshamos' suffering could save the whole world! If not for their yissurim, the world would have to revert to nothingness.

Our hearts are broken and suffering, but we have to remember that Hashem is speaking to each one of us. We have to be mitchazek in whatever needs improvement and make kabalos for the future.

Rabbi Dovid Levy Shlit"א - head of Pele Yoetz Institution

Serenity

Imagine a man who tripped and fell, and is lying on the ground. He remains on the ground, claiming that if Hashem caused him to fall, why should he even bother trying to get up?

It's clear this isn't the right response. The same goes for all suffering a person has; he must not sink into sorrow and pain, but rather keep himself busy doing

productive things, davening, learning, and helping out at home.

We must internalize the pain, but not panic or get depressed.

How can one overcome this pain? Hashem created man with the special ability to ignore things. For example when Shabbos enters, one must set aside all his business matters and consider them complete.

We too must set things aside. All the talking, reading updates and delving into details are mundane curiosity, not tzidkus. We must be caring and empathize, but not try to break our hearts with extraneous knowledge of the details.

There are those who can digest the pain on their own, while others need to discuss it with others. It's a big mitzvah to listen and calm our fellow Jew. Those who experienced it first-hand need more processing in order to digest the tragedy. Others may need therapy or medication to deal with the trauma. This too is ok and is what needs to be done. The pain and sorrow are like a burn – if not tended to, they deepen more and more. You can't allow the pain to fester; you have to find salve for your soul.

There are Yidden who want to empathize with the tza'ar of Klal Yisroel and thereby inspire themselves. Indeed, we can't ignore the natural painful emotions that arise, and we should use them to elevate ourselves. But if someone is absorbed in the pain too much, it doesn't make him a bigger tzaddik! We must move on and carry out our responsibilities to our families, Torah and mitzvos.

As for our children, they already heard some of the details. There's no reason not to talk to them about it, but absolutely do not go into any gory details. It can cause them fear and panic even more than to adults.

The children's serenity is dependent on their surroundings, especially their parents. If we express confidence and hope, they will feel it. Like a mother can say, "Children, yes, there was a big tragedy, but now it's time to eat."

May we merit to live a life of trust in Hashem, and speedily see the binyan Bais Hamikdash.

Rabbi Shlomo Miller Shlit"n

It is all mercy and love

אני מאמין באמונה שלמה הבורא יתברך שמו הוא בורא ומנהיג לכל הברואים, והוא לבדו עשה ויעשה לכל המעשים. There are no mistakes or mishaps; everything is under control. All that happened was according to the Divine plan. Indeed, we can't understand it, but every detail was meant to be. What would happen, who would be there – everything.

Rav Moshe Einhorn, principal of a seminary in Yerushalayim, once asked his father, who was a holocaust survivor: "How did you keep on going?" He answered, "At all times, even when the worst horrors confronted me – I saw the Ribono Shel Olam. I didn't understand a thing, but I knew without doubt that it's all controlled from above."

The father told a terrible story about his friend who was together with him in Auschwitz. Somehow, this man found out about a trainload of people being taken to the gas chambers, and among them would be his daughter.

Right before they closed the gas chamber, he courageously asked a Nazi officer to take out his daughter. For some reason the Nazi agreed, and opened the door to call her out. A half a minute passed, and the daughter didn't come out, probably because she didn't hear him calling. Instead, another woman stepped forward and said, "Yes Father, here I am." The man realized he had an opportunity to at least save one life, so he greeted her as his daughter. The woman survived, came to Eretz Yisroel and merited to establish a beautiful family.

Rav Einhorn's father concluded, "Even in the gas chambers, behind locked doors, Hashem decided who would be saved! Then, as many other times, I saw Him there!"

With all our pain, we must internalize – everything is planned and controlled!

Rabbi Bentzion Feldman related that he knew a family who was close to the Chazon Ish. When the war broke out, the newspapers were full of terrible descriptions. The mother read this and was gripped by fear, since most of her family lived in Europe. She went to the Chazon Ish and started reading the newspaper accounts, and started crying. On and on she cried, as he listened sympathetically. Once she calmed a bit, he responded, "You should know that the maximal amount of mercy in this world is found only by Hashem. Everything He does comes from a place of only kindness and mercy."

The woman returned home with clarity and said she got the answer to all her questions and fears.

Years later, her brother fell ill and was flown abroad for surgery.

Unfortunately he didn't make it and his body was sent back for burial.

She stood up and declared: This is mercy! This is only loving-kindness!

The Chofetz Chaim said a parable: A man passed by a home and noticed a woman crying. He then saw she was cutting an onion and understood there would soon be good food coming. The man continued, and found a few more women crying; they too

gone! He looked all over the area, but there was no trace of it. Not only that, but he had put the bag with the money into the pocket of the stroller...

I told her to send him home.

Then I faced a nisayon. At first I felt angry at him for being so irresponsible, for ignoring my request to keep the money on him and for losing the stroller. But then I remembered all the yesodos of emunah from the shiurim and started saying words of emunah. Hashem arranged everything, it's all for the best; if Hashem wills it, I'll find the money and if He doesn't, then I won't. My family members heard me and added their own emunah tidbits: Maybe it would save me from a bigger tzarah, Hashem could send me even more money, and so on. I told them not to be upset at the boy when he comes home. He tried his best and should get credit for that.

When he came home a few minutes later, he was bracing himself for an onslaught of criticism, but instead was greeted by smiles and gratitude. He was so surprised! I told him it was a test of our bitachon and baruch Hashem we were accepting it joyfully.

Meanwhile, I started thinking how to get it back. We made a sign about the stroller, sent a child to put it near there, and davened. A very short while later, we got a phone call from an apologetic man. He had thought the stroller was for the garbage, so he took it. I asked him if there was an envelope in the pocket, he checked immediately, and it was still there! He felt even worse once he realized what a fright he had caused on a Friday afternoon, no less. I assured him that it was all right, everything is from Hashem and I had no complaints against him.

Everything worked out just fine, and we were happy to have been able to accept it with emunah and simcha!

(Thursday night Parshas Emor, story 4)

They Gave up the Bus and Got a Ride

Reb Yeshayahu Rubin from Bnei Brak:

I started driving one night from Tzfas to Bnei Brak. I was alone and wanted to have someone with me so I wouldn't fall asleep at the wheel. Also, why not help another Yid? So I went to the Trampiyada (place at the entrance to a city where people hitch rides) of Tzfas and called out "Bnei Brak!" There were no takers.

I decided to try again at Meron. There, a boy and his mother hurried over. The boy said to his mother, "See! I told you we would get a ride!" They seemed awed by my offer.

They got in and soon explained.

Ten minutes beforehand, a bus to Bnei Brak had passed, but there were only three seats left on it. The two were about to get on when they heard a father and his two sons getting on the bus, the children complaining about the cold. The next bus wasn't for another two hours! They felt so bad for them, they wanted to give up their spots on the bus. But how would they get home? The boy told his mother that he knew Hashem would help them get a ride. And here I was, a few minutes later, offering them a ride!

We were all amazed at the hashgachah, and at how a person doesn't lose out by being mevater. Not only that, but they said they actually lived in Petach Tikva, and were planning to take the bus to Bnei Brak, and then another one home. I told them I would drop them off at their door. Ultimately, they got home a lot faster than they would have by bus, and were much more comfortable, too!

The Cure on Pesach

I suffered for about twenty years from migraines, which would sometimes happen every week, and incapacitate me for three days. You can imagine that I couldn't function normally! I couldn't hold down a job, couldn't make plans to do what I wanted.

Life was very hard, until Hashem finally sent me a yeshuah. People prescribed supplements with omega 3 in the right dosage, and I was healed! Baruch Hashem, I finally started living again. I had to keep on taking them, because if I stopped, then the headaches would immediately come back.

When Pesach came, I couldn't find kosher l'Pesach supplements. I was very worried. How would I manage all Pesach? Would it be a horrible week? But I came to the conclusion that I had no choice, and just davened to Hashem, the Healer of all, that I would feel good on Yom Tov even without it.

And I felt fine! The rest of the year, I can't manage without it, but Pesach was different. Since then every year before Pesach, I daven the same tefilla, and

were slicing onions. He understood there must be an upcoming Bar Mitzvah. Next he saw a big group of women crying as they were slicing onions, so he concluded there must be a big wedding about to take place.

So too, said the Chofetz Chaim, when we see many Yidden crying, it's a sign that Hashem is preparing the great feast of Moshiach. May we merit, speedily in our days. Amen.

Rabbi Yehuda Mandel shlit" a of Lakewood:

Rashb"i brings the biggest achdus in Klal Yisroel

We have to keep repeating: Everything Hashem does is for good. Not just once or twice, but again and again. Everything is for the good! Everything is for the good!

Someone who is used to bitachon is the happiest and calmest man there is. Even in this difficult time he is strong and knows there is a major purification going on here, a huge tikkun for the whole world.

Yidden in the whole world are crying for their fellow brothers – what a wonderful Kiddush Hashem! It's a big zechus to cry for them; if you can't cry, that's okay too.

After Rabbi Akiva's 24,000 students died, he started again with just five, but they were closer than brothers. Rashb"i was among them, the best one. And on his hilula an event happened that united all Klal Yisroel throughout the world, everyone feeling the pain of other Jews! What nachas Hashem has from this! Mi k'amcha Yisroel.

But, it's assur to sink into aveilus. You have to lift yourself up, be b'simcha! That's right, b'simcha! Be happy that the tragedy wasn't even worse than it was. The yetzer horah loves sadness. In Navhordok they were happy all the time, without any exception.

My Rebbi Rav Gershon Leiberman zt"l lived for five years under Nazi rule. Five years of horrible suffering! And yet his talmidim testify that he was b'simcha all the time, even more than he was before the war!

Remember: Sadness accomplishes nothing! Never be tzebrochen! Some people argued to me that we have to be sad to join with the suffering of others. I have a question for them: Why don't you ever walk around with a big smile when others have it good? Shouldn't you join in their feelings? It must be that this is just an excuse for you to be sad!

The rule is, if you always look for the positive, you'll find it, and good things will happen to you. But if someone looks for the negative, chas v'sholom he could bring bad things on himself.

Many, many years ago I was in Monsey for Simchas Torah, right after the Yom Kippur War. There were many casualties and we weren't sure it was appropriate to sing and dance like usual on Simchas Torah. So we asked Rav Yaakov Kaminetzky. He said, "A Yid is a soldier! When he is ordered to dance, he dances!" He ordered us not to diminish the simcha one bit.

May we be zocheh to dance, all of us together, with Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

Rav Avraham Mordechai Malach shlit" a

תשפ"א - ראשי תיבות 'תהא שנת אמונה פשוטה'

We must know that there are two more who cry with us – Hashem and Rashb"i. We can't say it was a display of Hashem's wrath. The first rule we have to get clear is that we do not know anything! We aren't even trying to understand. We can't understand.

The Baal Horachamim Himself did this. At the same time that He was sustaining the entire rest of the world, He orchestrated this tragedy. "Rashb"i is kedai to rely on, in difficult times" – and this is one of the times. Hashem loves us and Rashbi is still our meilitz yosher. The acronym of this year spells out "it should be a year of emunah peshutah," as we face such a challenge and try to retain our unquestioning faith.

I visited a relative a few months ago, after he had a surgery. Then they discovered that the surgeon cut him in the wrong place... The patient said the pain was unbearable, since it didn't even accomplish anything.

Hashem is the Doctor of the world, and He doesn't make any mistakes! The cut was sharp and deep, but precisely what was needed, coming from His boundless mercies. He knows what He's doing!

One of the reasons for the simcha on Lag Ba'omer is that Rabbi Akiva's talmidim stopped dying. But is this a cause for celebration? Imagine it, over 800 levayos every day, until finally the last one was niftar. What's so joyous about that? The real simcha was that R' Akiva didn't give up, but began again with a new group of students, including Rashb"i. He kept on going. And that is what we have to do

now, in the face of this tragedy.

What exactly should we do? The Gedolim have pointed out different things, and each person has certain areas he knows he has to improve in. He just always kept pushing it off. Now is the time to act, to really improve ourselves.

May this be the final blow before Moshiach's arrival, and may we merit to see techiyas hameisim and the Beis Hamikdash.

Rav Dovid Kletzkin shlit"א

Hashem's is more merciful than anyone

The Shulchan Aruch writes, "A person should always be used to saying 'everything that Hashem does is for good'" (Orach Chaim 230).

I looked around in all the sefarim and I didn't find anyone arguing on this. It also doesn't say anywhere a caveat "except for Lag Ba'omer 5781"!

So this is also for the good.

Imagine what Rabbeinu Bechaye would say in our situation. He would get up and shout what he wrote in his sefer: The Creator Yisbarach is merciful more than any merciful being! Even if everyone would shower mercy upon a person in every way they could think of – Hashem's mercies are far greater!

Rashbi himself taught us what to do when there's a tzara, in the Zohar (Hakdama 12a). "When there's chas v'shalom harsh judgment, don't harden the heart to say it's just by chance and don't second-guess middas hadin."

The Zohar also says that Am Yisrael is always beloved to Hashem (Pekudei 244b). As we say in davening every day, "Hashem chooses His nation Yisrael, with love." He chose us to be His nation out of love, and His love toward us never, ever stops, even for an instant!

There are many halachos about nichum avelim. There are rules about what you should and should not say. The Rema writes (Yoreh Deiah 376:2), "Do not say to an avel, 'What can you do? You can't change it.' This is blasphemy, because it implies you would change things if you could. Rather, accept the gezeira from Hashem with love." The Taz explains that nobody should give the impression that he would change things to what he thinks is better, but accept that what Hashem does is the best.

So, nichum aveilim is all about expressing emunah that what Hashem does is for the best. This is the chizuk we should work on – to accept gezeiras Hashem with love.

The Zohar says that by chatzos in the night, the midda of rachamim is aroused in Heaven. This year, by the kever of Rashbi at midnight, thousands of Yidden sang with great excitement Bar Yochai, including, "Bar Yochai, to the field of apples, you ascended to collect delicacies." And at that same time, the passuk in Shir Hashirim was fulfilled: "My Beloved descended to His garden to pick roses." The precious neshamos of those Yidden were selected to be brought back to Him.

What is the significance of apples? Rashbi tells us that Klal Yisroel are beloved to Hashem and compared to holy apples who have varied, beautiful colors, a good smell and a sweet taste. Apples have medicinal properties!

Hashem came to pick apples from His field and selected a mixed variety of His beloved people. The niftarim were from all groups, styles and religious orientation. A beautiful mixture of His holy apples!

And then Hashem's Name was sanctified by the thousands of Jews accepting the gezeira, and trying to be mitchazek in emunah and bein adam lachaveiro.

May Hashem "wipe the tears from off every face," and replace them with tears of joy, very soon.

(From shiur 204 in Shaar Habitachon)

Rav Beirish Shneebalg shlit"א

Hashem Does Only Good

Everything in the world has positive and negative sides to it. Our job is to focus only on the positive and "choose life." Think about all the stories of people who were saved there, open miracles of yeshuah. Their stories are much more numerous than the negative ones!

Tzaddikim say that anyone who survived the Holocaust survived because Hashem sent two angels to stand next to him at all times. So too, in Meron, everyone who survived was surrounded by incredible chassadim from Hashem, the Baal Harachamim. We have to look at the good of the situation, and realize that everything Hashem does is for the good, for He is pure goodness. Don't look for who to blame. It was all done by Hashem.

That Hashem made it happen davka there and davka on such an auspicious day, may be for our benefit, so that now Rashbi will intercede for us to finally see a geulah shleima!

The Maharal says that worry and anguish

I feel just fine. This is the power of the mitzvah of avoiding chametz and the power of tefilla!

(Bitachon Yomi in 5 minutes, Friday Parshas Shemini

#146)

Fire Extinguishing

Klal Yisroel is in a state of hisorerus, since the tragedy in Meron. Everyone's trying to take the message to heart, and is looking for things to improve in our avodas Hashem.

For me, it wasn't hard to find something. I had been friends with someone for a long time, but then we got into a fight. It got so bad that we couldn't even look at each other anymore. I decided that the time had come to end the fight. Thinking about it again, perhaps he had been right to begin with?

I called him up and told him I forgave him, then asked that he forgive me as well, and that we should make a new start. He agreed and we resolved to renew our friendship.

I hung up feeling like a huge stone had rolled off my heart. What a relief! I was preoccupied with thoughts about the past and future, and leaned on the kitchen counter. Suddenly, I smelled fire. I looked down and realized someone had put a candle on the counter l'ilui nishmas the Meron niftarim, and my tzitzis had caught fire! I quickly shook them and put out the fire.

I took it a sign – I had just put out the fire of machlokes, and Hashem saved me from a physical fire!

Nothing Changed

I live in Modiin Illit. I am preparing for the wedding of my third child, and once again Hashem arranged a wonderful shidduch for us. Before we finalized the shidduch, I made up with the other side how much they would give towards an apartment.

At the vort, however, the mechutan came over to me, looking nervous, and said that in the end he can't obligate himself to give the amount we agreed upon, only about two thirds of it. I told him with a smile that there's nothing to worry about. He couldn't believe how relaxed I was; hadn't

we made a cheshbon about how much money we needed?

I told him that I listen to the amazing shiurim on the Kav, and that's how I've learned that Hashem gives us everything we need. If he gives me a little less, it makes no difference at all!

I thank Hashem for the zechus that I have to listen to the Kav. It certainly helped make this shidduch a pleasant experience!

Heavenly Accounting

I heard so many stories on the Kav about people who needed money and they turned to Hashem and received it. One day I decided to use the same technique, because I was 10,000 shekels overdraft in the bank. I davened to Hashem, "Abba! Please help me!" I davened with all my heart, knowing that only He could help me, and that He owns all the money in the world. Within a few weeks they gave out money for the corona period – 10,000 shekels!

Sometime later, we were in the middle of planning our next wedding, and the money was flying out of the account for all kinds of things. Before I knew it, I was 14,000 shekels overdraft. The limit is 10,000, so I was quite concerned. Once again, I turned to Hashem and asked that the account be balanced.

Right after that, my wife was working with an accountant to deal with her year-end paperwork. Baruch Hashem, we somehow made it through those difficult months when she hadn't worked; I can't explain exactly how. Now, the accountant asked her if she had applied for compensation for unemployment. My wife didn't even know there was such a thing. So the accountant asked her daughter to look into it for us, and she discovered that we were eligible for 12,000 shekels! What a wonderful, unexpected surprise!

It was perfect timing, because the money was supposed to come in just in time for our son's wedding. We checked the bank that day and were doubly shocked to discover that we actually received... double! 24,000 shekels!

Thank You, Hashem, who always takes care of us.

prevent shefa from coming to a person. The first step of emunah is not to fall into sadness and worries. To fulfill the passuk באיזקים בטחתי, you have to work on the continuation of the passuk, לא אירא רע, not to be worried and afraid. Don't worry, just trust in Him and stay calm. Then, He will give you even more yeshuos and shefa. My advice, from personal experience, is to say Tehillim and daven for it. Ask Hashem to give you tranquility so that you be able to truly trust in Him and be close to Him. It says כי ישר דבר ה' - what Hashem does is straight and proper. Next in the passuk is וכל מעשהו, a sort of question – how should we act to access these blessings? With the following word – באמונה! In the merit of our emunah and our efforts to be mischazek and see only the good in everything that happened, may we merit the Geulah shleima and everything good.

From Bitachon Yomi in 5 minutes

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein zt"l

About 45 years ago, a terrible tragedy happened in the U.S., when a car with five shochtim in it crashed, killing them all. Everyone was very shocked and bewildered. How could something like this happen to people who were en-route to do mitzvos?! People started blaming it on the driver, on the road conditions, and so on.

Rav Moshe penned a letter with the Torah hashkafa regarding tragedy. It is as relevant today as it was back then (O.C. Vol. 6:42):

A terrible thing happened – five bnei Torah and yirei Hashem were travelling to their jobs in the field of Torah and mitzvos, and they were killed on the road. This is something that the mind finds difficult to grasp, for bnei Torah and yirei Hashem, maaminim bnei maaminim with pure emunah, for whom nothing happens by chance, and nobody bumps their finger unless it was decreed from On High.

It states in Parshas Bechukosai that the worst sin is to ignore Divine punishments and to say they were by chance. It is kefirah of the foundations of faith, included in the first Ani Maamin, "The Creator, Blessed Be He is the Creator and Director of all creations, and He alone did, does and will cause all events."

Rav Moshe is teaching us not to blame anyone. Looking for blame is the greatest sin! It denies Hashem's hashgacha ch"v.

Still, after internalizing this tenet of our faith, we are left with questions. Why would such a thing happen? To this, Rav Moshe addresses next.

I have explained many times that when we say we have to be matzduk hadin (justify Hashem's din), it doesn't mean that we understand why Hashem, who is the Perfect Rock, did it and what is the system of this decree. These talmidei chachomim, yereim and shleimim, young men, left behind widows and children... Although we know of no apparent reason for it, we believe that "The Rock, perfect are His actions, His ways are justice and there is no inequity before Him; He is righteous and straight." We are forbidden to doubt Hashem's ways.

Rav Moshe continues to arouse Klal Yisroel to teshuva, that if Hashem brought a tzara, it's so we'll come closer to Him and increase our mitzvah observance. He lists some areas needing improvement.

Two main points emerge from his words:

1) To believe that only Hashem does everything. Internalize emunah, pure and simple: אני מאמין באמונה שלימה שהבורא יתברך שמו הוא בורא ומנהיג לכל הברואים והוא לבדו עשה ועשה ועשה לכל: המעשים. This includes every last bit of difficulty included in the tragedy. Tens of thousands of people were enjoying themselves at the hadlaka until suddenly their simcha turned to grief. Many thousands more were told to leave Meron, all those on busses which turned around and went back home, the hundreds of chalaka boys who were waiting for their joyous celebration for months and it was cancelled, those who rented homes in the north of Israel and they couldn't make it at all...

No detail is overlooked by Hashem. I spoke to someone who rented an apartment in Meron for Lag Ba'omer, which he ultimately was not able to use. He said that his tzara was like nothing compared to others'. He's right, but Hashem doesn't consider it nothing. It's all part of the plan, and each tiny detail accomplished something in its challenge.

2) We don't understand why it happened, but we do know one thing. Our Father in Heaven is perfect and does only good. As Rabbi Akiva taught us to say, "Everything Hashem does is for good."

Q's & A's

Q's & A's about emunah and bitachon

I have strengthened myself very much in emunah and bitachon. I know everything that happens is from Hashem and for the good. But sometimes a person does something irresponsible that causes him to suffer, like in shalom bayis and chinuch. Can a person then deflect responsibility and say it's all from Hashem?

Q #19

Y. M., Modiin Illit

The Past

Reb Refael Chaim Dashan from Yerushalayim; Reb Chaim Meir Daskal from Elad: Before you do something, you have the choice to do good or bad, but after the fact, it is not in your control. If it was a sin, it's clear that it was decreed by Hashem. Dwelling on the past just causes sadness. **Reb Yehoshua Fishman from Bnei Brak** tells of a businessman who made a bad deal and lost all his money. He came to Rav Chaim Greineman zt"l and mourned his mistake, but the Rav replied sharply: "If a person makes a good deal, makes a lot of money and thinks he accomplished this on his own, he's a *kofer*. The same thing applies if he loses a lot of money and thinks was the cause of his loss!" **Reb Chanoch Mendelson, from Beit Shemesh** recounts a similar story about the Toras Mordechai of Vznitz zt"l. A man came and expressed his feelings of guilt for the fact that his son went off the derech. The Rebbe said, "This has nothing to do with you! It's a decree from Shamayim!" **Reb Menachem Mendel Strauss from Bnei Brak**, found this concept hinted to in Tehillim 23, which begins with pesukim describing how Hashem leads and helps each person. Then it says "Even when I walk in the valley in the shadow of death... You are with me." It doesn't say "You cause me to walk," meaning that even when I don't feel Hashem guiding me, I can be assured that He is with me. Another source is Rechavam, who attributed his failure to "a cause from Hashem" (**Reb Shmuel Blau from Yerushalayim**). **Reb Yaakov Yosef Klein from Haifa**, quotes the Nesivos Shalom: Even regarding problems that a person seems to have caused himself, the words of Rav Yechiel MiMush apply. He says that the hands of the person who brought about the problem were created by Hashem. **Reb Eliyahu Steinberg from Yerushalayim**, adds that Rav Yaakov Meir Shechter *shlit"l* always says over the line he heard from a wise old lady, "Everything is from Hashem, even what we do on our own."

Yediah and Bechirah

Reb Rami Bozgallo from Elad: This touches on the fundamental topic of yediah (Hashem knows what we'll do) and bechirah (we can choose what to do). We have to work on making the right decisions, and at the same time believe that everything is from Hashem. Then, we'll act responsibly, without getting nervous and stressed. **Reb Yehuda Gewirtzman from Beit Shemesh:** Some people mix up the two things. They think their success

is their own and their failures are from Hashem, or vice versa. Stick to your own department, and don't assume you have any effect on the outcome. **Reb Dovid Israel from Beit Shemesh** adds that when you choose to do good, it brings yeshuos. **Reb Mani Darchi from Ramat Gan** explains that bechirah is not control. It is the process of trying to fulfill your job in the world. Afterwards, Heaven decrees the result. The Chovos Halevavos differentiates between mitzvos and affairs of this world (Shaar Avodas Elokim Ch. 8): When it comes to mitzvos, one should act with the impression that our affairs are up to us, and make every effort he can. But for matters of this world, one should assume that things are completely up to Hashem.

Heed your Messages

Reb Dovid Leifer from Yerushalayim: The past is irrelevant! The only thing one should so is learn from previous mistakes for the future. Most problems with shalom bayis and chinuch are due to imperfection in middos, so one should work on them and then things will improve. "The past is the best teacher for the future," states **Reb Shlomo Shimon Rothman from Beit Shemesh**. **Reb Moshe Nachman from Ashdod** notes that right after Aharon's two son's died, the Torah immediately gets practical about the future, "Do not come at all times into the Holiess." **Reb Tzvi Reuven Dovidovitz from Yerushalayim** points out that when we do teshuva, the sins become zechuyos.

Take Responsibility

Many listeners stressed that you have to act responsibly. If you act foolishly, you can't then blame the results on heaven. (**Reb Abba Levi from Haifa; Reb Chaim Schwartz from Bnei Brak; Reb Aharon Leifer from Rechasim**). **Reb Tzvi Reichel, from Modiin Illit:** This is what Shlomo Hamelech taught us in Mishlei (19:3). "The foolishness of man ruins his path, and his wrath is upon Hashem." Rashi explains that one's own sins cause him to suffer, and then he gets angry with Hashem for the yissurim! (Taanis 9a).

Question for issue 67

I am waiting for a certain salvation. The current situation is not good for me. I wonder what I should do - maybe I need to improve my actions, or maybe pray a lot more, or I should do more effort on the matter. Or God forbid to come to terms with the situation. I would be happy to receive an answer to that.

D.L., Beit Shemesh

To send in questions or answers: Leave a message on the Hotline at 02-301-1300 menu 3 ext. 5 (Yiddish or Hebrew) |

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Replies must include your full name and city Names of questioners are printed with initials and city

Thoughts from the Heart

Everything Hashem does is for the best. At the same time, difficult situations are messages for us to improve our actions. The word for challenge is *קושי*, from the root *קו* – a banner. Hashem wants us to grow from the challenge, and allow it to raise us higher, closer to Him.

At Machon Shaar Habitachon, we have been soul-searching about how to improve. What does Hashem want from us at this time?

One of the orphans spoke to Rav Dovid Kletzkin this week. The boy said that two days before his father was nifter, he had a problem in school. His father told him that whenever he faces difficulty, he should listen to Kav Hashgacha Pratis, and this will bring him calmness and serenity.

This was his father's spiritual tzava'ah, the son felt, and he promised to fulfill it. Every night before going to sleep, he'll call in for some chizuk.

Right now, everyone's talking; the atmosphere is strained and people have questions. Some people are upset, and searching for who to blame – they're not handling the situation well. The difference between how people are responding is clearly dependent on their level of emunah. A person with emunah and bitachon does not feel completely broken by any

challenges.

Those with bitachon are holding on even at this trying time. Within a raging sea, they hold on for dear life, as each succeeding wave comes crashing over them. They are grasping the rope that will save them, connecting them to Hashem. Whoever isn't holding on is falling...

We at Machon Shaar Habitachon want to help more and more people to hold onto the rope! We hear Hashem telling us, "Spread emunah and bitachon even more! Don't stop at the 250,000 Yidden who are already tuned in. Reach out even more!"

Dear fellow Yidden: We are a Kav for all of Klal Yisroel, trying to do Hashem's shlichus to increase chizuk in emunah and bitachon. Tell a friend about the line, call in and get chizuk and strength to handle the challenges that life sends us. If you are able, please distribute pamphlets or donate to the Machon. We recently started the "Meirim" initiative (in Eretz Yisroel) to distribute 250 copies. If this is not possible for you, you can receive 20 copies for just the mailing costs.

The phone numbers of the Kav in seven countries are found on the first page of the pamphlet. To donate, call 02-631-3742. To distribute, call 02-686-6075.

Let us all together grab tightly onto the rope of hatzalah and yeshuah, the rope of emunah, and may we soon see the final Geulah. As the Midrash says, "Klal Yisroel will be redeemed only in the merit of emunah."

Effects on Two Ends

On the receiving end

Hashem led me to Kav Hashgacha Pratis two weeks before Lag Ba'omer. Without it, I don't know how I would survive these days. Now I feel that I have the koach to get through this.

One of the mourners

This story is true. We were thinking of not printing it, because people wouldn't believe it.

I donated one Thursday for 3 of my relatives to find their shidduch. The following Thursday one got engaged, and the other two on Friday! Mazal Tov!

On the giving end

You, too, can be a partner in spreading emunah throughout the world, and merit the Zohar's promise of "children and grandchildren who are G-d-fearing and upright!"

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